

REMARKS

Claims 20-38 are pending in the application.

Appropriate headings have been added to the specification, and claims from the literal translation have been replaced by claims drafted in conformity with U.S. Patent practice. An abstract has also been added to the specification.

The application in its amended state is believed to be in condition for allowance. However, should the Examiner have any comments or suggestions, or wish to discuss the merits of the application, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to expedite placement of the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert W. Becker".

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* For Examiners Reference

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 19: Cancelled

20. (New) A method of reducing a draft effect of a flue duct upon an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system, including the steps of:

extending a downwardly open flue duct (1, 1') into a vat (12) so as, with the aid of a liquid that has collected in the vat, to form a liquid barrier that is adapted to close off a flue gas end of said flue duct (1, 1') relative to the environment;

relieving the upstream exhaust gas cleaning system from the draft effect of the flue duct by lowering the level of the liquid in the vat (12) below an edge of the flue duct (1, 1') to expose at least a portion of a cross-section of the flue duct.

21. (New) A method according to claim 20, wherein lowering of the level of the liquid in the vat (12) is effected by lowering the vat together with the liquid.

22. (New) A method according to claim 21, which includes using a trough as the vat (12), wherein the trough is associated with a lower edge of said flue duct (1, 1'), and wherein the trough (12) outwardly delimits a discharge plate (11).

23. (New) A method according to claim 22, wherein the liquid is adapted to flow over an outer wall of the trough (12) in the manner of a weir (17).

24. (New) A method according to claim 23, wherein a plurality of overflow weirs (17) are associated with various peripheral regions of said trough (12), and wherein the liquid in the trough is adapted to overflow outwardly via said overflow weirs (17) and to drain the trough.

25. (New) A method according to claim 22, which includes adjusting a depth of

immersion (20) of said flue duct (1, 1') into the trough (12) by vertically positioning the trough.

26. (New) A method according to claim 22, which includes re-establishing a chimney draft in the exhaust gas cleaning system by vertically delivering the trough (12) and the discharge plate (11) to the lower end (3) of the flue duct (1, 1') to such an extent that the flue duct extends into the liquid of the trough to a predescribed depth (20).

27. (New) A method according to claim 26, which includes adjusting the depth of immersion (20) by varying the vertical feed of the trough (12).

28. (New) A method according to claim 22, which includes applying this method with an open exhaust gas cleaning system.

29. (New) An arrangement for reducing the draft effect of a flue duct upon an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system, comprising:

a vat (12) in which liquid is to be collected, wherein a downwardly open flue duct (1, 1') is adapted to be immersed in liquid collected in said vat (12) to form a liquid barrier that is adapted to close off a flue gas end of said flue duct (1, 1') relative to the environment; and

means (14, 16) for lowering the level of the liquid in said vat (12) below an edge of said flue duct (1, 1') to thereby expose at least a portion of a cross-section of said flue duct in order to relieve the upstream exhaust gas cleaning system from the draft effect of the flue duct (1, 1').

30. (New) An arrangement according to claim 29, wherein said vat (12) is adapted to be vertically lowered relative to said flue duct (1, 1') by means of said means (14, 16) for lowering the level of the liquid.

31. (New) An arrangement according to claim 30, wherein said vat (12) is embodied as a trough that is connected in a gas tight manner with a downwardly inclined discharge plate (11) to form an assembly (10).

32. (New) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein said discharge plate (11) that is connected with said liquid-conveying trough (12) has a pyramidal, conical or spherical configuration and provides for a discharge of the liquid into said trough (12), and wherein such discharge is distributed over a periphery of said trough.

33. (New) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein said discharge plate assembly (10) is supported on said flue duct (1, 1') by means of a support apparatus (6, 14, 16), the length of which is adapted to be varied.

34. (New) An arrangement according to claim 33, wherein said support apparatus is provided with a plurality of lifting mechanisms (16) distributed over a periphery of said trough (12).

35. (New) An arrangement according to claim 33, wherein said discharge plate assembly (10) is secured to said flue duct (1, 1') via length-variable tie rods (14) in such a way as to ensure a closure of said flue gas end of said flue duct relative to the environment.

36. (New) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein a plurality of overflow weirs (17) having a uniform height are distributed over a periphery of said trough (12).

37. (New) An arrangement according to claims 36, wherein liquid discharge means (18) are provided downstream of said overflow weirs (17).

38. (New) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein openings for chimney draft air are provided in said flue duct (1, 1'), and wherein said openings are adapted to the closed off via air supply shutters or louvers and/or by sliding doors.